



ABCD in Leeds

Case Study - Chris

The Beginning:

Chris in his early fifties, was feeling tired and anxious and overall his mental health was suffering. He was feeling low and was coping with having recently come out of a difficult long term relationship.

Chris was quite isolated and since taking early retirement on the grounds of ill health he had no local networks or friendships. Chris presented as shy, timid, and unapproachable to workers who had tried to engage with him.

Knowing about the Community Builder in New Wortley and how Asset Based Community Development works on discovering people's gifts the GP made the introduction.

"I no longer feel as shy or timid and I've made lots of new friends. I have good reason to leave the house"

Chris



The Journey:

The Community Builder met regularly with Chris, building a relationship of trust. Over time it transpired Chris was an avid gardener.

When Chris spoke to the Community Builder about gardening and plants, he became animated and more forthcoming. Underneath the outer layer was a nice, easy going gentleman who loved gardening, fishing, and woodwork. Chris was so knowledgeable and passionate about gardening he wanted to help the area with these skills.

The Community Builder worked with Chris to find other citizens in New Wortley interested in gardening and together they set up an Urban Task Force. A group of four was created which consists of people who share an

Thirty sites were identified by the community in the local area to weed, clear litter and plant new shrubs and flowers to help make the area look prettier and more appealing. The Task Force also grow fruit and vegetables for local people. Fruit and veg is used at the local community café and sold at local fairs and is also donated to local food banks.

Chris also now works on the local allotment, making raised vegetable troughs for the benefit of patients at the local Health Centre. He also contributes to the Armley Action Team bringing his gardening expertise to matters of the 'In Bloom' area works.

Chris has attended a course called 'Supporting Others, Supporting Yourself.' He has also enrolled at Leeds City College for a Level 3 Teaching Qualification as well as attending a safeguarding course. He wants to be enabled to pass on his carpentry and gardening skills to vulnerable people.

The Impact:

Today, Chris is enjoying early retirement and has treated himself to a new greenhouse. He is enjoying the busy Urban Task Force twice a week, as well as supporting others to learn more about gardening and flowers.

Chris was seen out and about wearing a decorative flowered buttonhole he had and on the back of someone seeing this, he was commissioned to grow and provide the buttonholes and flowers for a local wedding.

Chris is now a much happier and settled person who spends his time volunteering and in turn, he too has now been able to offer support to help his community.



"Chris has recently rekindled family relationships and is again on talking terms with his two sons. He has met his young grandchildren and goes on fishing trips with his family. He had previously isolated himself from his family as he didn't want them to know of his problems and be a burden to them."

Community Builder